



Your Ref:  
Our Ref: ES/SP  
Contact: Eleanor Sheppard  
Location: Marischal College

Date: 11th December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

You will have seen a great deal of information in the media about how the school holiday period will impact on Contact Tracing arrangements. With that in mind I thought it would be helpful to outline current arrangements and make you aware of the agreed process from 18<sup>th</sup> December through to 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

An incident of Covid-19 currently triggers a need for school staff to undertake an extensive initial investigation to identify who the positive case has been in close contact with. For the purposes of assessing close contacts within a school setting, a close contact would be defined as a person who, in the 48 hours prior to and 10 days after the confirmed case's symptom onset, or date a positive test was taken if asymptomatic, had at least one of the following types of exposure:

- face to face contact with a case within 1 metre for any length of time, including being coughed on, having a face-to-face conversation or skin-to-skin physical contact
- any contact within 1 metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- any contact between 1 and 2 metres for more than 15 minutes

This initial investigation is guided by Public Health who define the 'infectious period' to be investigated. In real terms, this involves the school senior leadership team reviewing timetables, table plans, lunch arrangements and considering how the pupils travelled to and from school etc. Public Health review and quality assure the information provided and advise the school of any actions to take. During school term time, this involves the sending of letters to those confirmed by Public Health as close contacts to ensure that families are informed of the need to self-isolate. Families are then contacted by Contact Tracers to advise of the self-isolation period.

As you will appreciate, Public Health will continue to hear of positive cases over the holiday period and will require to undertake contact tracing. Public Health has advised that they will require access to Officers to help undertake investigations up to and including 27<sup>th</sup> December. In order to ensure that school staff can enjoy the holidays, a small number of Officers have been identified to support Public Health. The Officers will undertake the same process as is currently undertaken by School Leadership Teams but will not send letters to all close contacts as Public Health will contact families directly.

Many of you have raised concerns about the risk of children being identified as a close contact after the end of the school term. Please be assured that school staff will continue to ensure that the mitigations detailed in the school risk assessment continue to be strictly adhered to in order to lessen risks in school. We are extremely conscious that many of you intend to see extended family over the holiday period and ask for your help and support in ensuring that all social distancing rules are adhered to out with school.

You may have seen the First Minister advise that community transmission creates the greatest risk at this time. In real terms, this means avoiding car sharing arrangements, avoiding sleep overs and avoiding allowing children and young people to gather or socialise together in each other's homes. I would ask that you do all you can to ensure that your child follows the national guidance out with school hours to help limit the number of families impacted by being asked to self-isolate over the holiday period.

I thank you for your support in this matter and appreciate your continued vigilance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eleanor Sheppard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'E' and 'S'.

**Eleanor Sheppard**  
Chief Education Officer